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方蘇繪畫

Paintings by Fong So

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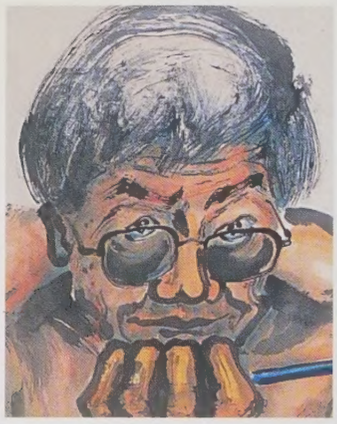

Fong So

1951	Born in Guangzhou
1962	Moved to Hong Kong
1963-69	Studied painting with Professor Chao Shao-an, master of the Lingnan school
1974	Graduated from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, B.S.Sc. in Economics
1974-78	Schoolteacher and co-editor of a magazine for secondary schoolteachers
1979-81	Worked in a publishing and book selling company
1981-98	Editor (1981) and later Managing Editor (1982-98) of *The Nineties Monthly*, a current affairs magazine
1985-96	Elected as an executive committee member of the Hong Kong Journalists Association and elected as vice-chairman for several terms
1998-	Painting city life

方蘇

1951 年	生於廣州
1962 年	移居香港
1963 至 69 年	隨嶺南派畫家趙少昂教授學畫
1974 年	畢業於香港中文大學，獲社會科學學士學位
1974 至 78 年	任職教師，兼為一本中學教師雜誌擔任編輯
1979 至 81 年	在圖書公司負責出版及經銷書籍工作
1981 至 98 年	擔任時事刊物《九十年代》月刊（原名七十年代）編輯 (1981 年)，1982 至 98 年為執行編輯
1985 至 96 年	當選為香港記者協會執行委員會委員，其中數屆出任副主席
1998 年起	繪畫城市生活

城市生活：方蘇繪畫

City Life
Paintings by Fong So

22.11.2000 - 7.1.2001

香港大學美術博物館
University Museum and Art Gallery
The University of Hong Kong

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City Life : Paintings by Fong So

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Fong So

鳴謝

承蒙香港大學美術博物館提供展覽場地，使我的畫作有機會得到各方的批評和指導。我特別感謝已故的何俠老師和趙少昂老師，他們在我年少時免費教授我繪畫。我在此圖冊發表的文章，英文稿得到艾絲珀・希堪斯修改潤色；有幾位資深藝評家曾給予我寶貴的意見和鼓勵；還有楊慧敏以她敏銳的藝術觸覺所提供的協助，在此一併致謝。

方蘇

Foreword

In the works of Fong So, life in the city appears hustling and bustling, while at times it lays idle. His paintings depict aspects of everyday life in Hong Kong society: an old woman feeding a wild cat or one who scavenges; a commoner dozing off or one who shouts to peddle his goods; patrons at a tea-house sharing tables; senior citizens gathered together to play Chinese dominoes or read the racing post; a street fortune-teller; a hawker selling pots of mandarin oranges during lunar new year; a crippled television fan; a long queue of elderly outpatients; idlers sitting on benches in a park; a scene of the bird-flu incident in Hong Kong; a family with member confined to a wheelchair; an offering in the street to the deceased; fish containment at Tap Mun; a day out on the harbour-front; an MTR train during rush hour and university graduates posing for photos on the university campus.

Through these realistic scenes from life, Fong So depicts different aspects of life in a metropolis, bringing into focus those who are old or neglected, and simple city folks; familiar yet extraordinary. Some works reflect the pressures of city life, which can at times be suffocating. In his rainy scenes he expresses his feelings towards the transfer of Hong Kong's sovereignty to China. He also excels in his vivid depictions of dogs and cats in the neighbourhood. Fong So's technique combines traditional Chinese ink and pigments with watercolours, having considered seriously the issue of colour usage. His forceful brushstrokes reflect his training at the Lingnan School of Chinese painting and reveal the influence of German Expressionism. Within a period of only two years, he has managed to complete this group of paintings that are innovative in composition, fascinating in colour, and of subjects that stimulate thought and contemplation.

The University Museum and Art Gallery is devoted to the propagation of Hong Kong art, an area of particular interest which UMAG hopes to encourage through exhibitions of works by local artists. Our Museum hosts this first solo exhibition of works by Fong So which is able to present visitors with different aspects of life in the city which they call home. Fong So dedicated himself entirely to painting only two years ago. It is indeed admirable that through powerful linework and diversified subject matter, he is able to successfully epitomise city and rural life in Hong Kong. We hope that Hong Kong artists will continue their creative work and help foster the development of art in Hong Kong.

Anita Wong
Curator
University Museum and Art Gallery
The University of Hong Kong

前言

方蘇作品中的城市生活，營營役役、尋尋覓覓，時而百無聊賴，涵括了現今社會的眾生相：餵街貓和拾荒的老婦、打闔睡和叫賣的市井之徒、“搭檯”的茶客、圍賭天九和看馬經的老年人、“照田雞”的江湖相士、過年推銷桔子的小販、不良於行的電視迷、輪候門診的老人、公園長椅上的閒人。他的作品活現了各種時事，各樣景貌：禽流感事件、坐輪椅的家庭、路祭先人、塔門魚排、忙裡偷閒的看海日子、繁忙時段的地鐵車廂，以至大學生在校園拍攝畢業照片的情景。

方蘇通過這些寫實作品，深入描繪出形形色色的都市生活，突顯被人遺忘的老弱一群和城市中的小人物，在平凡中展現他們的不平凡。部份作品更反映都市壓力，令人喘不過氣來。方蘇藉雨景表達對回歸的感覺，又以左鄰右里的貓狗作題材，這些效果均非常傳神。他利用中國傳統的筆墨顏料，混合水彩，經過認真的色彩研究，運用深厚的嶺南畫派筆力，在德國表現主義的影響下，花上兩年時間完成了這批構圖獨特、色彩濃烈、發人深省的作品。

香港大學美術博物館一向關注香港藝術的發展，並藉著舉辦各類型的展覽和教育活動，來鼓勵本地藝術家從事創作。本館主辦方蘇的第一次個人畫展，除推介方蘇的獨特作品題材和藝術風格外，也希望引起觀眾對現在身處的城市生活，有更深刻的體會。方蘇兩年前才專注繪畫創作，卻能通過強而有力的線條和多樣化的題材，成功地捕捉香港的都市生活和坊間文化，實在難能可貴。本館希望各位藝術家積極從事創作，共同推動香港藝術的發展。

香港大學美術博物館館長 黃燕芳

The Story of *City Life*

Fong So

In 1999, I started to use traditional Chinese painting media, mainly ink and Chinese *Xuan* paper, to depict present-day city life. After seeing more and more local art exhibitions, I found that people and city life had rarely been the concern of those painters using Chinese media. Shortly after I started to paint city life, a friend paid me a visit in my small apartment, where I had turned the living room into my studio. Looking at the almost finished painting of an old woman collecting scraps, she said, 'that's not a Chinese painting.' I asked what she expected to see in a Chinese painting. Her answer was: 'Flowers, birds on the branch, or a beautiful landscape.'

Yes, I painted flowers, birds on the branch, and landscapes decades ago when I was still a secondary school student. At that time, I took private lessons from a famous master of Chinese painting, Professor Chao Shao-an. Like all other followers of Professor Chao, I copied his smaller works (about 30 x 40 cm) for several years. As my family was poor, I could not afford to pay tuition fees to Professor Chao. Nor could I afford to use expensive paper and brushes. I was fortunate in that Professor Chao agreed to teach me for free. He was a brilliant master of technique. I learned how to use brushes from him.

I was introduced to Professor Chao by a veteran revolutionary, a follower of Dr. Sun Yat Sen called He Xia. I met him by chance at the age of ten when I was living with my father in Guangzhou. One day when I was making a sketch of an exhibit in the Art Museum of Guangzhou, he appeared in front of me and addressed me as 'little fellow'. I was later told that he had been an ardent supporter of Dr. Sun Yat Sen's attempts to turn China into a republic. By the time I knew him, he was an old man of about seventy, and had retired. He had in his collection quite a number of Chinese paintings, most of them the

works of old masters of the Lingnan School. After that he let me visit him and study his collection. It was 1961. Food and other daily necessities were in short supply. Paper was almost a luxury to me. People told me that I should use special paper and brushes for Chinese painting. But my father could only provide me with poor quality pencils and small pieces of paper.

In 1962, I left Guangzhou to join my mother in Hong Kong. He Xia wrote to Professor Chao and asked him, if, as a favour, he would teach me for free. I became the youngest student of Professor Chao in 1963 and studied under him up to 1969, until I was forced to work day and night to prepare for the university entrance examination.

I went on writing to He Xia through my father for some years. Then I lost contact with him. Some years later, I learned from my father that the old veteran had passed away during the Cultural Revolution. It is possible that my father deliberately kept a distance from He Xia during the Cultural Revolution because of his own problematic personal history. My father had served as a general clerk in a military supplies office of a division of the Kuomintang army during the war against the Japanese invasion. He lost his job after the war and remained unemployed after the Communist Party came to power. In the eyes of his children, he was never a good role model. He was extremely disagreeable and bad tempered. None of his children liked him. To me, the only good thing about him was that he had never discouraged me from learning drawing or painting. He used to take me to the few museums in Guangzhou and let me copy anything I liked.

fig. 1 **The Painter's Father** 1998
Marker pen on paper

After leaving Guangzhou, I went back to visit my father very rarely. In early 1998, I heard that he was in hospital and went to see him. He was so ill that he looked pale and yellow. He appeared to be somewhat nervous and confused when he saw me. At the age of eighty-six, his eyesight was not bad. Yet his eyes were bloodshot, and had already turned grey. I returned to Hong Kong next day, after seeing him in the hospital once more. I had to meet a production deadline for *The Nineties Monthly*, a current affairs magazine of which I was one of the editors. On the way back to Hong Kong, I made a sketch of his facial expression (fig. 1). He died ten days after my visit.

My mother was a factory worker when I came to Hong Kong from Guangzhou. Her income was barely enough for the basic necessities, let alone expensive painting materials, like good quality *Xuan* paper and brushes. When I was fifteen, I got my first summer job

in a factory, earning a daily wage of ten Hong Kong dollars. My first two weeks' wages were spent almost entirely on a large ink stone which I had been longing for ever since I started to paint with brushes. Even now that piece of ink stone is still my basic painting utensil.

After entering the Chinese University of Hong Kong I stopped painting. I got involved in the student movement and spent more time serving the student union than attending lectures. Then, after graduation, I became the major income earner of the family. To my mother's disappointment, I never got a well paid job. I worked as a teacher for some years in several private secondary schools. At the same time, I ran a non-profit-making magazine about education with some friends. Then I joined a current affairs magazine, *The Seventies Monthly* (later renamed *The Nineties*), and kept myself busy all the time with my job and other voluntary activities. During the eighteen years when I worked as a journalist, my painting brushes were left completely idle.

It was in late 1997 when I thought about my future career that I began seriously to consider painting. After the closure of *The Nineties Monthly* magazine in 1998, I took my longest ever trip abroad (three months). I intended to figure out what to do and how to survive for the rest of my life. However, when the trip came to an end, I still had no idea what to do. Returning to Hong Kong in November, I tried to keep myself busy working with pastel. Having no full-time or part-time job at all, I could not help feeling idle and useless. I found that I was distracted from this sort of worry by working long hours with pastel. At first, I cared very little what my subject was. I was trying to hide away from people I knew. I left my old apartment in Kowloon and stayed mainly in the western district on Hong Kong Island, an old area with a lot of old people. With so many old people around, I started to draw old people.

In the western district, I watched the old people and took notes about what they did. Most of the old people in that area looked quite neglected but hard-working. My impression was that they did not live with the younger generation. They tried hard to keep themselves busy. Many of them were street-hawkers selling vegetables, fruit and other things like small household utensils (plates 3 and 6). Some of them collected all sorts of scraps and sold them to recycling shops to earn just a few dollars (plates 4 and 5).

Among those old people was a hunch-backed old woman who fed the street cats of that district every evening. I followed her several

fig. 2 **Street Cat** 1998 Pastel on paper

times and watched her feeding the cats. She bent so low that her nose nearly touched the ground when she walked up the slope of a particularly steep old street. She carried a heavy rattan basket filled with packs of food wrapped in waste paper. All the street cats came to greet her and waited to be fed. I could hear the words of complaint she murmured to the cats: 'You nasty creatures! Don't you know how much time and money I spend on you? Tens of dollars to buy fish; and two to three hours to cook your meal everyday.' I made a pastel of an old woman feeding a black cat (fig. 2) and later transposed the pastel into a painting (plate 7).

Soon I developed the habit of carrying a small sketch pad with me wherever I went. I visited some other districts of the city and saw old people everywhere. They usually spent their days sitting in the park, having nothing to do at all. I made simple sketches of them and turned most of them into pastel.

After working with pastel for three months, I picked up my painting brushes again. The frustrating experience I had in the old days when I was a young follower of an old master returned. I was just about able to control the brushes when I tried to paint birds on the branch in the old way. But every time I attempted something else, it turned out to be a total failure. I felt depressed. It seemed that it might take me years before I could paint something other than birds on a branch.

fig. 3 **Breakfast** 1998 Pastel on paper

Learning to work with brushes and *Xuan* paper was a tiring process of trial and error. After numerous failures, I eventually succeeded in transposing the pastel of an old woman holding a sandwich (fig.3) into a Chinese painting (plate 1). My second attempt was the portrait of my father. After repeating it nine times, a piece nearly five feet in length came out (plate 2). It became obvious that my old apartment, less than 400 square feet and divided into two rooms, was too small a studio for me. After hunting for a studio for some time, I moved to a village house in the New Territories in May 1999.

The village house had a larger than normal living room, about 200 feet square. It attracted me because it was bright enough with large windows. Another attraction of the village house was a cat owned by the landlord's mother. It was an elegant cat with black coat and white paws, surprisingly similar to the one I painted after my pastel. After moving in, I found the landlord's mother had two cats. The other one was an orange and white male tabby with a short hooked tail. The two cats were strays rather than pets. They were friendly to me as I always

fed them and played with them. During the year I stayed there, the black cat gave birth to two litters of kittens. It was winter when the second litter was born. For more than ten weeks, I let the mother cat and the kittens stay in my flat. Later I put the whole family of cats in a painting (plate 18). Among the four kittens in the same litter, the cutest one was a tri-colour kitten with beautiful black and brown spots. I named it 'Coffee Bean'.

The black cat appeared two more times in my paintings: in 'TV Addictive' (plate 14) and 'The Neglected' (plate 19). The idea of painting 'TV Addictive' was conceived shortly after I moved into the village house where I found most of my neighbours were TV fans. 'The Neglected' was inspired by a large dead rat I saw one day in front of the door of a house where an old woman was always home alone. I was not sure whether the rat was killed by the black cat. It was cleared away a few days later by her neighbour.

fig. 4 **Dogs Waiting for Food** 2000
Pencil on paper

The landlord's mother owned another stray animal, a yellowish male dog with one floppy ear. It was a gentle and obedient dog. It soon became a good model for me. Then a female stray dog with a scarred face came and became a very good companion of the male one. I learned from a neighbour that it was a run-away dog because it had been ill-treated so often by its owner. Obviously out of distrust, it always kept a distance from people. Even though I fed it, it never came close to me. One day I went downstairs to feed the cats and dogs, and saw the stray dog waiting attentively next to the male one. The way the two dogs looked made such an impression that I made a sketch of them (fig. 4). They did not look like strays when I finally painted them (plate 17).

Before I started painting cats and dogs from life, I worked most of the time turning my pastels into Chinese paintings. In July 1999, two years after Hong Kong's handover, I started on an ambitious attempt to paint my impressions of the handover. During the handover in 1997, I was asked about what impressed me most. I immediately thought of the rain because it rained heavily for weeks at that time. Therefore I decided to paint the handover as a rainy scene. I spent several days making studies. The final one showed a group of people standing in the rain waiting for something to happen (fig. 5). The study was then transposed into a painting of two six-foot panels (plate 13).

fig. 5 **Study for 'The Rain'** 1999
Marker pen and crayon on paper

Near the village house, there was a nature education centre, promoting nature conservation, operated by a government department. The centre attracted a lot of visitors. In a special corner of the centre,

fig. 6 **Study of Foodstuff** 2000
Marker pen, crayon and pastel on paper

organic farm products were sold every Sunday. I became a regular customer until one day a person in charge of the special corner told me that some of their products were genetically modified. The availability of genetically modified food reminded me of some alarming incidents involving food. I decided to paint a still life of foodstuff (fig. 6 and plate 24). The first time I showed this painting to a foreign friend, I asked him what he saw in it. 'Dinner,' he said immediately. Then, as if he was reading a riddle, he said, 'wait, wait. I guess I see something else.' He got the answer eventually, and the stories behind the foodstuff I painted.

Over the past few years, there have been many cases of food poisoning caused by vegetables contaminated by insecticide or other chemicals. It was generally believed that contaminated vegetables came more often from mainland China than from local farms. After the opening up of China's economy, many vegetable merchants got their supplies from the farms on the mainland. It was possible that some mainland farms were supplied with hazardous insecticide or fertilizer by unscrupulous dealers.

Of course, the most horrifying incident was the outbreak of a previously unheard of epidemic of bird flu in late 1997 and early 1998. Bird flu was caused by a virus that only attacked birds in the past. The first case of bird flu virus attacking human beings was discovered in Hong Kong. It immediately hit the headlines around the world. It remained unclear how this virus had become fatal to human beings. When Hong Kong was infected with bird flu, more than one million chickens were slaughtered and disposed of.

A few weeks after the bird flu, the sea water around Hong Kong was attacked by a red tide, formed by the presence of large numbers of certain plantlike flagellates in a density fatal to many forms of marine life. It caused devastating losses to most of the fish farms. Two and a half years after the disastrous red tide, I visited an old fish farmer, a former fisherman, at the place where he bred fish. He told me he had suffered losses all the time thereafter because of the poor quality of the sea water.

In May 2000, I moved away from the village house after renting a larger apartment in the city. The last painting I finished in the village house was the one featuring an old woman with a zimmerframe, escorted by a young couple (plate 28). This image came from a real life scene that I witnessed one day. I saw an old woman struggling to walk with a zimmerframe. The young couple escorting her also appeared to

be having great difficulty, because they did not know what to do with her. After hearing all those stories about how difficult it was to live with the older generation, I thought it might be nice to try to illustrate in a painting the difficult relationship between two different generations. I made use of the scene I saw. In order to make the hands of the young couple more expressive, I studied hand signs for the deaf for quite some time. Finally, when I executed the painting, I blurred the faces of the old woman and the young couple to make it a general phenomenon rather than a particular case.

There was a seaside town fifteen minutes walk away from the village house where I stayed for a year. In the old days, the town was a small fishing harbour. However, it had become quite urbanized in recent years with many seafood restaurants catering mainly for people from the city. A lot of holiday makers went to the seaside town on Sundays and public holidays. In the small harbour where many families lived on boats in the past, most fishing boats had been turned into tourist boats to attract holiday makers. I went there quite often. I enjoyed watching the harbourfront and the way the owners of the tourist boats wooed customers. Almost every time I went there, I saw an old woman with two bent legs. She walked in a clumsy way, swaying violently to left and right. I guessed she must have been brought up on a boat and have been fastened for a long time to her mother's back when she was a baby. In the past, it was a common practice for Chinese people to carry babies and young children in this way, by fastening a baby to the mother's back with a piece of grotesquely cut and sewn cloth. Now people rarely use this method, knowing that it might have a damaging effect on the legs of the baby. Unfortunately, most of the women who lived on boats, before they were housed on shore, used this undesirable method for fear that young children might fall overboard when they were not being watched. Visiting some other seaside towns and old fishing villages in Hong Kong, I saw more old people with bent legs. They appeared before me as the bearers of the history of Hong Kong. I felt compelled to paint 'Living Ashore' (plate 29) to record this piece of history.

There was a small park in the seaside town where I could see a lot of old people playing Chinese dominoes whenever I passed by. I had seen old people playing Chinese dominoes when I was still in the western district and had done a pastel at that time (fig. 7). I found Chinese dominoes quite a popular game among old people although few

fig. 7 **The Domino Players** 1999
Pastel on paper

fig. 8 **Study for 'The Outpatients'** 2000
Pencil on paper

people of my generation knew how to play it. I could see old people playing this ancient game almost everywhere. Another interesting place in the seaside town was the off course betting centre of the Hong Kong Jockey Club. On days when there were races, it was so crowded that one had to struggle really hard in order to get inside. I found this centre no different from all other off course betting centres in the city. When I moved back to the city, I made more studies of domino players and the punters in a betting centre and eventually I painted 'The Dying Game' (plate 31) and 'Horse Racing Day' (plate 32) .

Shortly after renting a large apartment in the city, I started to prepare another ambitious project, to turn twelve old women into a twelve-foot tall painting. It was after watching a long queue of old people waiting outside a public clinic that I decided to make such an attempt. Early one morning, I happened to see such a long queue of outpatients well before the clinic opened. The scene struck me. I was later told that some people queued there as early as six o'clock in the morning. I began to make studies of the queue (fig. 8). Four months later, I turned the studies into a painting (plate 35).

Before working on the twelve-foot one, I tried some other large pieces, though they were smaller than the very big one. 'Three Generations' (plate 30) was executed after drastic changes were made to the original study. In 'Lunar New Year' (plate 33), hand signs were put to use once again. 'Graduation' (plate 34) was painted after seeing many real life scenes on several university campuses in recent years.

With no human figures at all, 'The Flyover' (plate 37) may be somewhat different from all other pictures in this catalogue. I painted it as an attempt to illustrate what the landscape and conditions are like in a congested city like Hong Kong. As a matter of fact, there is a flyover in front of my little old flat in Kowloon, with cars driving past about five metres below the windows. One of my aunts, my mother's childhood friend from the same native village, lives just below the mid-levels on Hong Kong island. Right above the window of her third floor flat, there is a flyover, the incredible Hill Road Flyover, running directly from the mid-levels down to the harbourfront. The flyover was constructed after she moved there. I still remember the interesting comment she made some years ago: 'The work of the devil,' she said. 'Who the hell could have imagined that they would be able to build a flyover to this height!' To me, it's a really exiting experience to ride on the upper deck of a double decker bus and go downhill on this flyover.

In this catalogue, three self-portraits are included. After seeing a lot of self-portraits painted by artists using western media, I believed I should try to do it with Chinese media. I started to make studies of myself (fig.9). Then one day when I was shaving, I found the razor looked like a question mark in the mirror. I was suddenly reminded of some of the questions I was asked after picking up my painting brushes again. Those were questions about the subjects chosen by painters using Chinese media, about the difference between Chinese painting and western painting, about Chinese art and modernity. I rarely thought about such questions before I painted present-day city life. In the past, I took most of the old traditions of Chinese painting for granted, including putting inscriptions and seal prints on a painting. In late 1999, in order to have some seals made by my own hand, I did seal carving for nearly two months. Eventually I was asked what was the point of putting seal prints on a painting. I could not find a satisfactory answer to that question. I began to think about whether I should put seal prints on my paintings about city life. After turning the study of me shaving into a Chinese painting, I put nearly all the seal prints I had made on it (plate 40).

fig. 9 **Study for 'Self-portrait with a Brush'** 1999 Pencil on paper

After painting city life for nearly two years, I still fail to give people a satisfactory answer when they ask me why I painted something like that. Finally, I can only say that we belong to our time and I am no exception. After all, we all bear the imprint of our time.

Living in a rapidly changing world, I always find myself struck by ordinary aspects of our life and times. So, I have tried to put some of them into my paintings over the past two years. The exhibition *City Life* in the University Museum and Art Gallery, the University of Hong Kong gives me an opportunity to show what I have done up to now. I am looking forward to making more attempts in the years to come. I hope some of them will appear in my forthcoming exhibition at the Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, California.

(This article is edited by Elspeth Hyams, who helped to polish the English version.)

「城市生活」的片段

方蘇

從一九九九年起，我開始用畫中國畫的筆墨和宣紙，繪畫現今的城市生活。看了一個又一個本地的畫展，總覺得畫中國水墨畫的畫家甚少以城市眾生為題材。我繪畫城市生活之後不久，一個朋友過訪。當時我的客廳就是畫室，我正在畫一個老婦拾廢紙，接近完成。她看了看那張畫，說：「那不是中國畫。」我問她畫什麼才算中國畫，她的答案是：「花啦，鳥啦，又或者山水啦。」

不錯，我以前也畫花鳥和山水。那是三十多年前的事，我還在上中學，課餘跟隨著名的趙少昂教授學畫。趙老師門下弟子眾多，跟他學畫，全都要經過臨摹階段。和其他人一樣，我臨摹老師的小張冊頁，臨了好幾年。因為家境清貧，我付不起學費，也買不起貴價的紙筆。幸而趙老師願意免費收我為徒。我跟隨他學會了基本的筆法。

介紹我跟趙老師學畫的人是個老革命，名叫何俠，早年曾追隨孫中山先生，為創建民國出過力。我十歲那年認識他，當時我和父親住在廣州。一天，我在廣州市美術館摹畫一幅展品，抬頭見到他。他叫我做「小朋友」。我遇到他時，他已年逾七十，早已退休。他收藏了一批中國畫，多數是嶺南派老一輩畫人的作品。他讓我到家裏去看畫，做小張的臨摹。那年是一九六一年，糧食和生活用品都很緊張，紙張幾乎是奢侈品。畫中國畫要用特殊的紙筆，但那時我父親只能給我粗劣的鉛筆和一些小紙片。

一九六二年，母親把我接到香港。我到香港之後不久，何俠寫信給趙老師，情商他免費教我畫畫。第二年，我成為當時趙老師門下最年少的學生。我跟隨趙老師六年，直至一九六九年，因為忙於應付大學入學試，才沒到他的畫苑去上課。

有一段時間，我通過父親和何俠保持書信來往，但幾年後就失去了聯絡。再幾年後，父親來信說，何老已在文化大革命時去世。很可能是父親本身的歷史背景複雜，因此在文革時刻意與何俠保持距離。我父親在抗日戰爭時曾在國民黨政府的軍隊中做事，在一個軍需

處當過小職員。戰後他已經無業，在共產黨建政後也一直是個閑人。在他子女的心目中，他從來不是個好的樣板。他脾氣暴躁，極難相處，所有的子女都怕他。對我來說，他唯一的好處是從不阻止我學畫。他帶我到廣州僅有的兩三家美術館去看畫，我在那裏喜歡畫什麼就畫什麼。

離開廣州之後，我甚少回去探望父親。一九九八年，他進了醫院，我到廣州去看他。他看來病情嚴重，臉色灰黃。見到我，他顯得有點緊張，也有點迷糊。他已經八十六歲，視力還可以，但滿眼紅筋，睛珠灰濁。第二天我再到醫院看了他一次，隨即回港。那時我仍是《九十年代》月刊的編輯，要趕着回來出雜誌。回來之後，我畫了一張速寫，畫的是老父住院時的面容（圖1）。十天後，傳來他去世的消息。

圖1 **老父** 1998
粗線水筆

我剛從廣州到香港時，母親在工廠打工。她入息微薄，僅能應付起碼的食用，買不起貴價的紙筆和畫具。十五歲那年，我找到一份暑期工作，做工廠，日薪十元。我學畫之後，一直渴望有個較大的墨硯。結果，暑期工的頭半個月工資，就用來買了個墨硯。今天，我用的還是那時買的那方墨硯。

考進香港中文大學之後，我荒廢了繪畫。我捲進了學生運動，奔走學生會的時間比聽課的時間還多。大學畢業之後，我成了家中主要的經濟支柱。可是我找到的工作從來不是高薪厚職，母親時有抱怨。我當了幾年中學教師，換了幾所學校，都是私校；然後進了《七十年代》月刊（後來改名《九十年代》）擔任雜誌編輯。自此，我做了十八年新聞工作，加上長期做些義務工作，終日奔忙，幾乎完全沒有碰過畫筆。

到了一九九七年底，我想到自己日後還有什麼可以做，才開始嚴肅考慮繪畫。一九九八年，《九十年代》月刊休刊，我趁此機會外出遠遊，一去就是三個月。當初我以為，外遊散心可以靜下來，想一想下半輩子怎樣過。去了幾個月，到頭來還是茫無頭緒。回到香港，無事可做，難免憂心忡忡，覺得自己既無聊又無用。我設法令自己閑不下來，於是從早到晚畫粉彩畫，不讓自己憂慮太多。開始畫粉彩時，我不問題材，也沒有什麼想法和目的。我原住九龍，為了避開過去認識的人，我躲到港島西營盤去。那是個老區，到處都是老人。既然到處是老人，我就開始畫老人家。

西區是觀察老人家的好地方。那裏有很多看來頗為孤獨但卻非常勤勞的老人。他們好像沒有和下一代同住。他們總會找一些活來幹，很多老人賣蔬果和雜貨，有些拾廢紙和汽水罐去換幾塊錢（圖版3，4，5，6）。

圖2 **街貓** 1998
粉彩

有個駝背老婦，每晚在正街附近餵街貓。有幾次我跟着她，看她餵貓。她的背彎得很厲害，上斜路時鼻子差點就要碰到地面。她提着一個籐籃，籃裏放着一包包食物，用報紙包着。周圍的貓都出來恭迎，等着她送來的晚餐。她口中唸唸有詞，對着貓抱怨：「你們這群壞傢伙，不知花了我多少錢，買魚每天要十多二十塊，還要花兩三個鐘頭替你們煮飯。」我先畫了一張老婦餵一隻黑貓的粉彩（圖2），後來再用水墨畫了一次（圖版7）。

不久，我養成了個習慣，隨身帶備一本小小的速寫簿。我去過香港其他地區，觸目所見都是老人家。他們通常呆坐在小公園裏，沒有什麼可做。我畫了一些速寫，回家後再將速寫畫成粉彩。

畫了三個月粉彩後，我開始使用毛筆，當初學水墨畫時的挫折感又重新出現。如果按照老辦法畫花鳥，毛筆還受控制；一旦嘗試其他題材，就完全失控。我情緒極度低落，以為除非只畫花鳥，否則至少要磨練好幾年，才能處理其他題材。

我硬着頭皮不斷嘗試，幾經失敗之後，終於把一幅粉彩（圖3）畫成水墨畫，畫中人是一個拿着三文治的老婦（圖版1）。第二幅水墨畫是我的老父。畫了九次，最後完成的是一幅差不多五呎高的水墨畫（圖版2）。當時我住的地方不到四百平方呎，一房一廳，根本不夠用作畫室。看過好幾個地方後，我終於在新界找到一間村屋，一九九九年五月搬了進去。

圖3 **早點** 1998
粉彩

村屋的客廳還算大，有二百平方呎，窗戶大，光線充足，對於我來說，很有吸引力。另外吸引我的是房東母親的一隻黑貓。那黑貓四蹄踏雪，酷似我畫的街貓。搬入村屋後，我發現房東母親還有隻雄貓，毛色黃白，尾巴短小。那兩隻貓不像是寵物，卻像野貓般來去自由。我餵它們，又逗它們玩，所以它們都愛跟我。我住在村屋的一年裏，黑貓產下兩胎小貓。第二胎小貓出生時，天氣非常寒冷，我把小貓養到屋裏，讓它們住了十個星期。後來我給那些貓畫了一張全家福（圖版18）。第二胎小貓中有一隻特別可愛，毛色斑斕，有黑色和棕色的斑點，我叫它做「豆豆啡」。

黑貓還在我的畫中出現了兩次：「電視迷」（圖版14）和「遺忘」（圖版19）。「電視迷」的構思來自鄰居的生活習慣。搬入村屋後，我發覺四周都是電視迷。「遺忘」則從一隻死老鼠得到啟發。有一天，我在一個獨居老人的屋前看到一隻碩大的死老鼠，老鼠可能是黑貓捕殺的，幾天後一個鄰居才把死老鼠清理。

房東母親還有一條狗，和貓一樣也是來去自由，形同野犬。那是隻黃毛的雄犬，有隻耳朵下垂。它馴良聽話，很快就成為我的素描對象。之後來了一隻滿臉傷痕的雌犬，成為雄犬的伴侶。聽一個鄰居

說，這隻野犬過去經常被主人虐待，於是跑了出來。雌犬怕人，總與人保持一段距離；就算我餵它，它也不肯走近我。有一天我下樓去餵貓狗，看見雌犬站在雄犬身邊，眼中滿是期待。它們的神情令我難忘，我畫了一張速寫（圖4）。後來再畫水墨時，它們已不再以流浪狗的姿態出現了（圖版17）。

畫真貓真狗之前，我的大部分時間都是用來將積累的粉彩轉成水墨。一九九九年七月，亦即香港移交中國後兩年，我第一次嘗試畫大畫：繪畫香港九七的印象。記得移交之際，有人問我什麼令我最有感觸。我立刻就想到下雨，因為當時下了一連好幾星期的大雨。我決定將九七移交畫成雨景。做了幾日畫稿後，我終於畫了一群人站在雨中，情景就像等待一些事情發生（圖5）。這張畫稿後來轉成了高六呎的二屏（圖版13）。

村屋附近有個自然教育中心，由一個政府部門管理，推廣保護自然生態的概念，吸引了很多遊人。逢星期天，中心有個角落擺了個攤檔，出售有機種植的農產品。我成了小攤檔的常客。直到有一天，攤檔一個管理員告訴我，他們有些農產品的基因經過改造。那些基因經改造的食品令我想起一連串有關食物的嚴重事件。我決定畫一幅以食物為主題的靜物畫（圖6及圖版24）。畫成之後，我把這幅畫給一個外國朋友看，問他看到什麼。「晚餐」，他立刻說。然後，像猜謎一樣，他說：「等一等，另外還有些意思。」最後，他找到了食物背後隱藏的含意。

過去幾年，香港發生了很多次市民吃蔬菜中毒的事件。一般香港人相信毒菜大多來自大陸。中國經濟開放後，很多蔬菜從內地輸入香港。可能有不法商人提供劣質或者有毒的農藥給內地的農場，導致蔬菜殘留農藥而有毒。

當然，最可怕的事件是一九九七年底爆發的禽流感。那種病毒以往只有禽鳥才會感染到，從未在人類身上出過問題。全球首宗人類染上禽流感的個案在香港出現，立刻成為世界各地傳媒的頭條新聞。直到現在，醫學界仍無法找出禽流感為何會變成令人類致命的病毒。香港爆發禽流感時，屠殺了一百多萬隻活雞，棄置在堆填區。

殺雞後幾星期，香港周圍的海水出現了大量紅潮，嚴重破壞了海洋生態，養魚業受到沉重打擊。兩年半後，我探望一個養魚的老人。他告訴我，那次紅潮之後，情況一直沒怎樣好過，他養魚總是虧損，就因為海水的質素太差。

二〇〇〇年五月，我在城裏租了個寬敞的寓所，於是又搬回城裏去。我在村屋完成的最後一件作品，畫的是一個撐着助行器的老婦，由一對年輕男女拱護着（圖版28），取材自生活的實景。有一

圖4 **待飼** 2000
鉛筆

圖5 **「雨」的畫稿** 1999
粗線水筆及蠟筆

圖6 **食物的畫稿** 2000
粗線水筆、蠟筆及粉彩

一天，我見到一個老婦撐着助行器，兩旁的一對男女看來手足無措，對着那個老婦不知該怎麼辦。我聽很多人說過，年輕人和上一代同住是一大難題。我想，也許我眼見的情景可以把兩代人相處的那種困境刻畫出來。我找到一本書，學聾啞人的手語，把畫中那對男女的四隻手畫得有更多內容；最後還把三個人的眼和臉都畫得模糊一些，藉此表現那是常見的現象而非個別事例。

圖7 **玩天九** 1999
粉彩

從我住了一年的村屋步行十五分鐘，就到了一個濱海的市鎮。曾幾何時，那市鎮只是一個小漁港，但如今已經和都市無大差異。那裏開了很多海鮮菜館，顧客多數是城裏來的人。逢星期天或公眾假期，城裏的人蜂擁而至。昔日的小漁港，如今艇戶已不再打魚，漁船都改成了遊艇，供遊客遣興。那也是我常去的地方。坐在海邊，可以看海，還可以看那些上了岸的船家怎樣招徠顧客。在那裏，我經常見到一個雙腿外彎的老婦。她走路時左搖右擺，步姿笨拙。看來她是個水上人，很可能年幼時住在艇上。以往華南的女人都把小孩繫在背上。如今人們已視之為陋習，因為這種方法會導致小孩彎腿。可能當年她母親怕她掉到水裏去，長時間把她繫在背上，背彎了她的腿。我去過好幾處香港的漁港和漁村，都見到彎腿的老人家。他們似乎背負着香港的歷史。我畫「上岸」（圖版29），就是想為他們的歷史補記一筆。

圖8 **「候診」的畫稿** 2000
鉛筆

都市化後的小漁港，有些地方很有意思。那裏有個小公園，聚着一堆堆老人家，整天在玩天九（排九）。我躲在西營盤時，也常見老人家打天九，還畫過一張粉彩（圖7）。看來上一代很多人愛打天九，但我和很多同輩的人都不知道這種古老的遊戲是怎麼玩的。另一個有趣的地方是香港賽馬會的場外投注站。每逢賽馬日，那個投注站擠得針插不進，與市區所有投注站相比，毫不遜色。我畫了一些玩天九和下注賽馬的速寫，搬回城裏之後畫得更多。速寫稿最後變成了「終局」（圖版31）和「賽馬日」（圖版32）兩張水墨畫。

在城裏租到較大的居所，人自然更加振奮。我開始盤算畫張大畫，高十二呎，畫十二個老婆婆。那是我在一個公立診所外見到的情景。一天清晨，我路經診所，看見一條人龍，等着開門。那個情景令我吃驚。後來聽人說，有些老人家不到六點就去排隊候診。我先做畫稿（圖8），四個月之後才真正動筆畫「候診」（圖版35）這張「十二金釵」。

畫這張十二呎的大畫之前，我先畫了幾張不那麼大的水墨，算是演習。「三代人」（圖版30）的構圖改了幾次，和原先的畫稿完全兩樣。畫「年」（圖版33）的時候，我又一次加了手語。「畢業」（圖版34）是真情實景，近年在香港幾所大學的校園裏很容易見到。

在這本圖冊中，「天橋」（圖版37）和其他作品頗不一樣，沒有畫人，反而畫了個臉譜。我想用這張畫映現香港這個城市擠逼的情況和景觀。我在九龍住了多年的小寓所，就對着一條行車天橋，汽車在窗下五米呼嘯而過。我有個阿姨，其實是母親幼時的同村好友，住在港島半山下面。她住三樓，窗外有條天橋，橋底比窗門還要高。那就是不可思議的山道天橋，從半山急奔而下，斜插到海旁。她住到那裏之後，天橋才興建。幾年前，我去看她。對着天橋，她說：「鬼整（鬼怪整做）的！鬼才想得到他們會把天橋建得那麼高！」對我來說，坐在雙層巴士上層，經這條天橋下山，實在夠好玩和刺激。

這本圖冊收錄了三張自畫像。我看西方的繪畫，常見畫家的自畫像。我想自己也不妨一試，於是就對鏡畫了又畫（圖9）。有一天，我對鏡刮鬍子，鏡中的刮刀看來很像個問號。我突然想到重拾畫筆之後，被人問過一些我一直難以解答的問題：為什麼中國畫總是那些題材？中國畫和西洋畫有什麼不同？怎樣能使中國水墨畫更有現代氣息？在畫現今的城市生活之前，我幾乎從未想過這些問題。中國畫有很多傳統習慣，我過去毫不懷疑。譬如題字和蓋章，我覺得是理所當然的事。去年底，我刻了差不多兩個月的印，為的是要在自己的畫上蓋自己刻的印章。終於有人問我，為什麼中國畫非蓋章不可？這個問題我沒法好好解答。我開始想，是否要在自己的畫上蓋章。最後我畫了自己刮鬍子的樣子，把刻了兩個月的印章全蓋在上面（圖版40）。

圖9 **「畫筆」（自畫像）的畫稿** 1999 鉛筆

我畫城市生活至今，快兩年了。人們問我為什麼畫這種東西，我的答案連自己也不滿意。最後我只能說，我們都屬於自己的時代，我也如是。說到底，我們全都帶着時代的印記。

我們身處的世界變化急劇。在我們的時代和生活中，一些平常的事物往往也會令我吃驚。過去的兩年中，我嘗試在作品中描畫了其中部分。香港大學美術博物館這次名為「城市生活」的展覽，使我有機會展出兩年來的畫作。我希望今後能作更多嘗試，部分新作會在下一個展覽於美國加州柏沙典納的亞太博物館展出。

1

早點　　Breakfast

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

103 x 68 cm (40.5 x 27 in.)

1999

2

老父，臨終 The Painter's Father, Days before his Death

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

138 x 83 cm (54 x 32.5 in.)

1999

3

倦 Fatigue

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

144 x 83 cm (56.5 x 32.5 in.)

1999

4

穫　　Harvest

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

152 x 83 cm (60 x 32.5 in.)

1999

5

覓 Searching

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

150 x 83 cm (59 x 32.5 in.)

1999

6

叫賣　For Sale

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

145 x 83 cm (57 x 32.5 in.)

1999

7

街貓　　Street Cat

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

152 x 83 cm (60 x 32.5 in.)

1999

8

慰 Consolation

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

96 x 121 cm (38 x 47.5in.)

1999

9

同行　　A Walk

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

178 x 96 cm (70 x 38 in.)

1999

10

蹣跚 Difficult Steps

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

178 x 96 cm (70 x 38 in.)

1999

11

祭 Offering

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

172 x 93 cm (67.5 x 36.5 in.)

1999

12

喘（二題）
水墨設色紙本
2 x (110 x 68 cm)
1999

Gasping for Breath (two versions)
Ink and colour on paper
2 x (43 x 27 in.)

13

雨 The Rain

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

二屏，每屏178 x 96 cm (70 x 38 in.)

In two panels, each 178 x 96 cm (70 x 38 in.)

1999

14

電視迷　　TV Addictive

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

152 x 83 cm (60 x 32.5 in.)

1999

15

無聊　　Idleness

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

152 x 83 cm (60 x 32.5 in.)

2000

16

排排坐　　Sitters on a Bench

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

156.5 x 96 cm (61.5 x 38 in.)

2000

17

伴 Companion

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

152 x 83 cm (60 x 32.5 in.)

2000

18

家 A Family

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

152 x 83 cm (60 x 32.5 in.)

2000

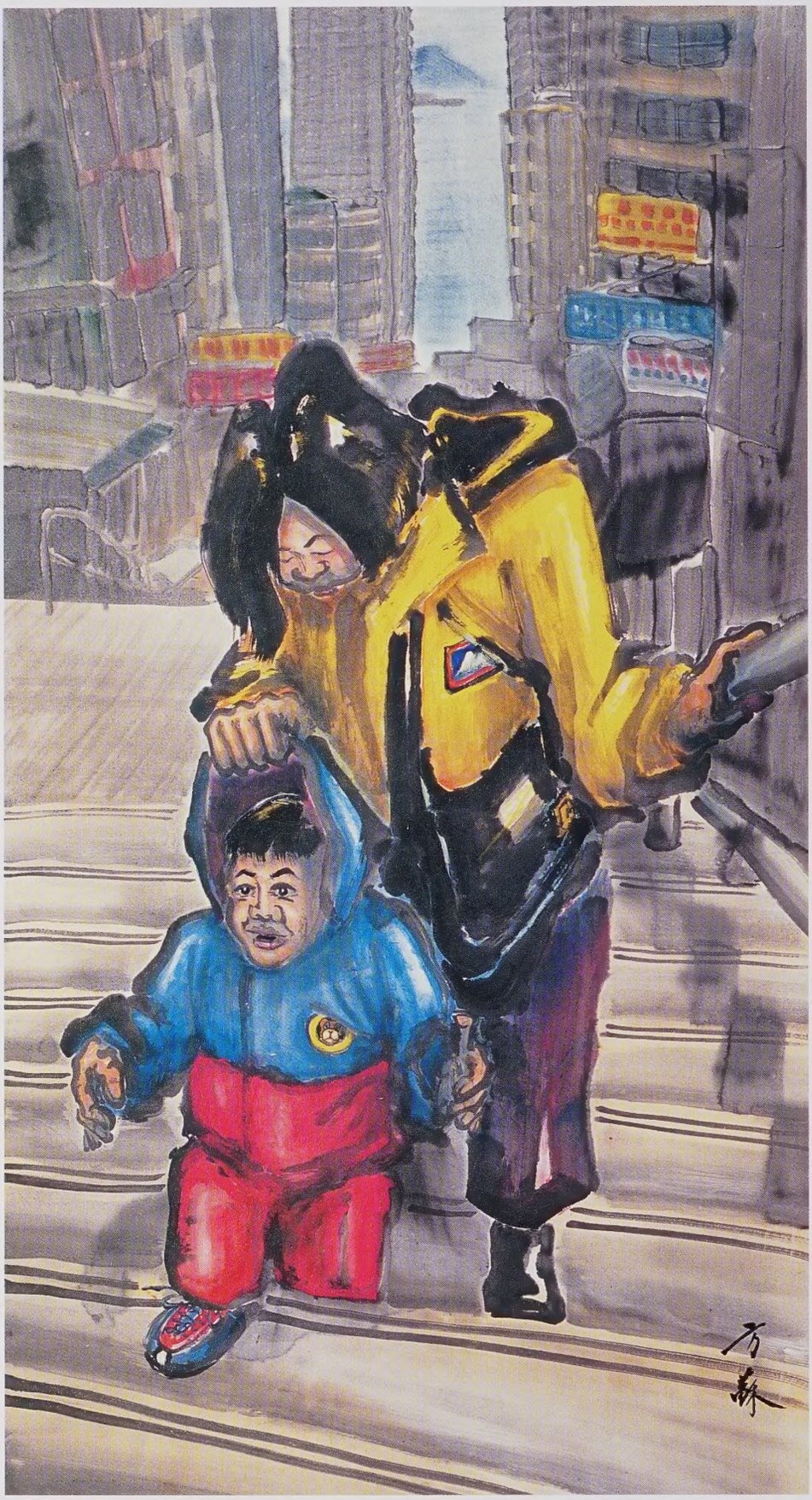
19

遺忘　The Neglected

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

179 x 98 cm (70.5 x 38.5 in.)

2000



20

上 Ascending

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

180 x 96 cm (71 x 38 in.)

2000

21

落 Descending

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

179 x 96 cm (70.5 x 38 in.)

2000

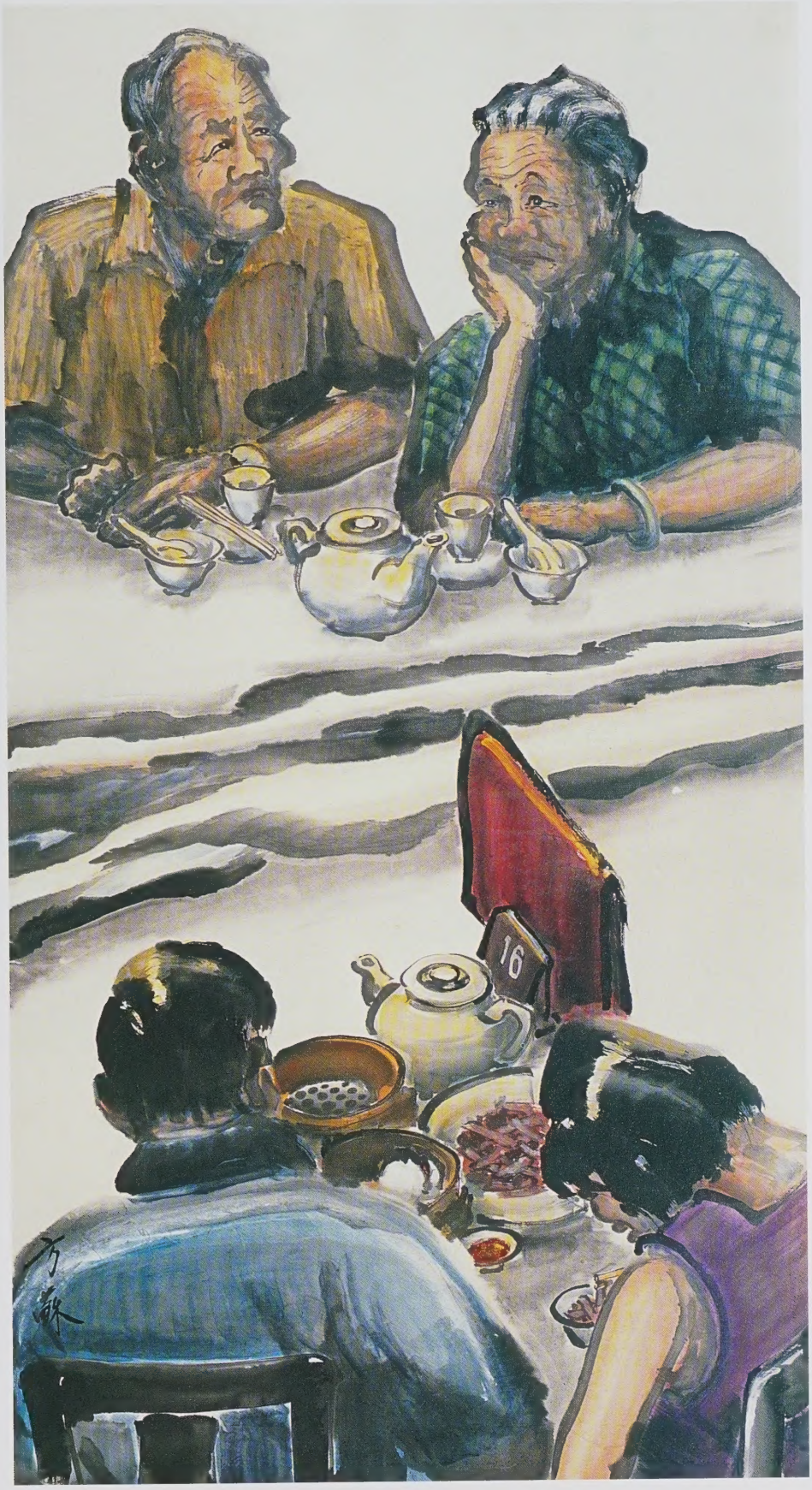
22

疑難　　A Word of Advice

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

171.5 x 93 cm (67.5 x 36.5 in.)

2000



23

搭檯　　Sharing a Table

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

171.5 x 93 cm (67.5 x 36.5 in.)

2000

24

世界變　　Brave New World

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

83 x 102 cm (32.5 x 40 in.)

2000

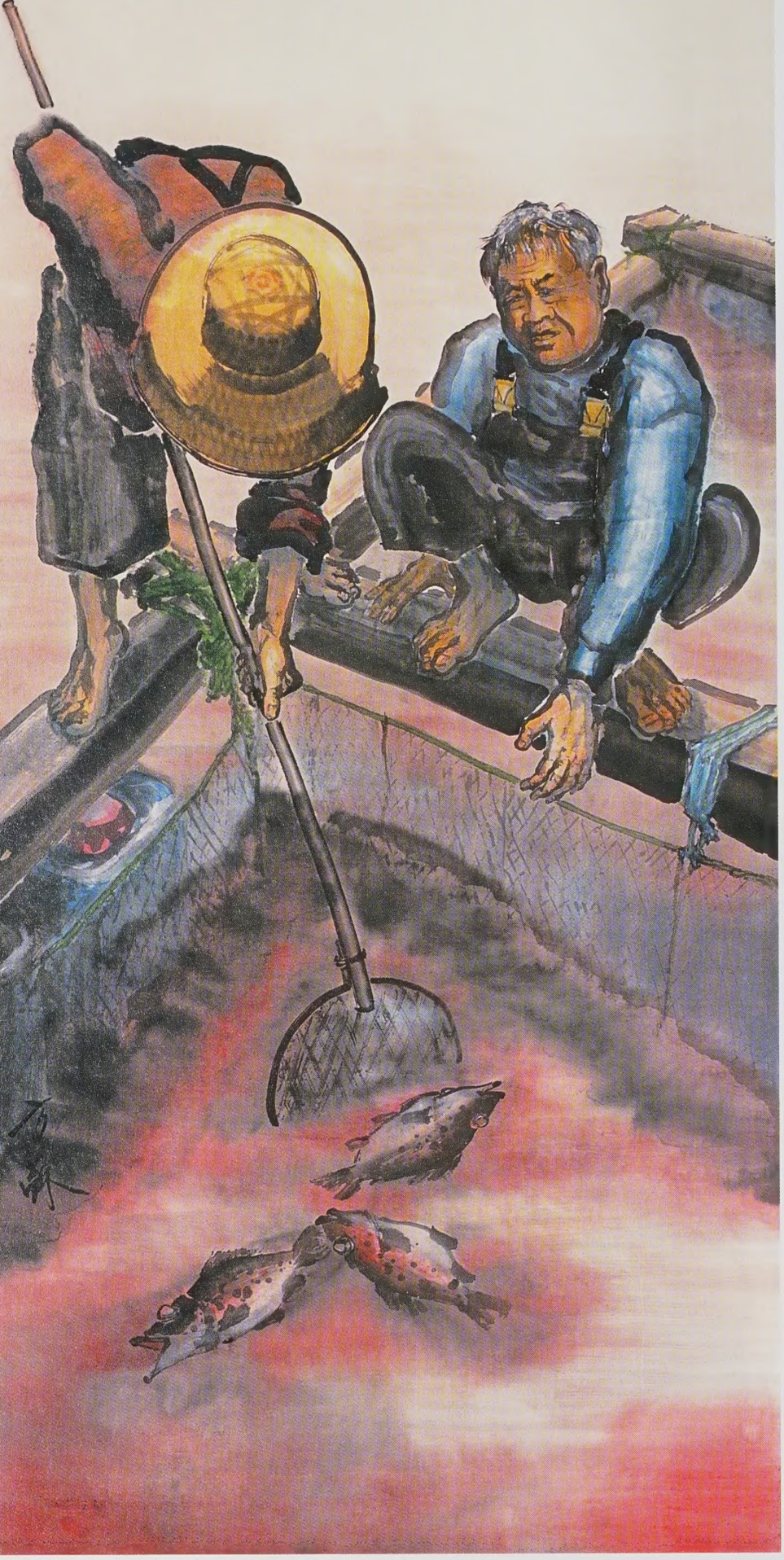
25

疫 The Epidemic

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

221 x 105 cm (87 x 41 in.)

2000



26

災 The Disaster

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

248 x 123.5 cm (97.5 x 48.5 in.)

2000

27

看海 The Sea Watchers

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

123.5 x 205 cm (48.5 x 80.5 in.)

2000

28

侍 The Escorts

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

183 x 144 cm (72 x 57 in.)

2000

29

上岸　　Living Ashore

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

166 x 144 cm (65.5 x 57 in.)

2000

30

三代人　　Three Generations

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

175 x 123.5 cm (69 x 48.5 in.)

2000

31

終局　　The Dying Game

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

144 x 197 cm (56.5 x 77.5 in.)

2000

32

賽馬日　　Horse Racing Day

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

123.5 x 179.5 cm (48.5 x 70.5 in.)

2000

33

年 Lunar New Year

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

241.5 x 123.5 cm (95 x 48.5 in.)

2000

34

畢業　　Graduation

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

248 x 123.5 cm (97.5 x 48.5 in.)

2000

35

候診　The Outpatients

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

366 x 144 cm (144 x 57 in.)

2000

36

繁忙時間 Rush Hour

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

185 x 123.5 cm (73 x 48.5 in.)

2000

37

天橋　The Flyover

水墨設色紙本　Ink and colour on paper

183 x 123.5 cm (72 x 48.5 in.)

2000

38

畫筆 (自畫像)　　Self-portrait with a Brush

水墨設色紙本　　Ink and colour on paper

171 x 96 cm (67 x 38 in.)

2000

39

速寫簿（自畫像） Self-portrait with a Sketch Book

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

163 x 97 cm (64 x 38 in.)

2000

加拿大香港文獻館
Canada-Hong Kong Resource Centre
1 Spadina Crescent, Rm. 111 • Toronto, Canada • M5S 1A1

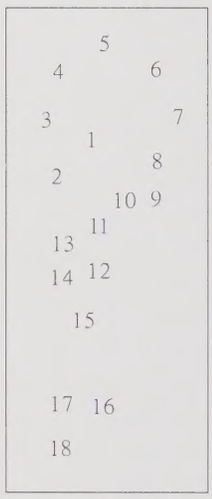
40

未解答的問題（自畫像） An Open Question (Self-portrait)

水墨設色紙本 Ink and colour on paper

92 x 83 cm (36 x 32.5 in.)

2000



印章 Seals

1 風雨同舟
2 人間煙火
3 方蘇
4 但願人長久
5 天亮之作
6 天下蒼生
7 跨越九七
8 方蘇
9 方
10 兔（肖形印）
11 方蘇
12 Fong So
13 方
14 天亮
15 國畫題字鈐印，已是成規。
或謂：何不破除？蓋看畫自明，
何勞解說？且今人不學印章古篆，
豈非妨礙欣賞？
16 城市生活
17 City Life
18 十八年新聞工作之後

1 Weathering the storm in a same boat
2 Smoke and fire on earth
3 Fong So
4 Let's hope that we can last longer
5 The work of Tian Liang (daybreak)
6 Ordinary people under the sun
7 Getting through 1997
8 Fong So
9 Fong
10 Rabbit pounding medicine
11 Fong So
12 Fong So (in English)
13 Fong
14 Tian Liang (daybreak)
15 It is a common practice to put inscriptions and seal prints on Chinese paintings. This raises the question: Why should we stick to the old traditions? Is it necessary to explain a painting by inscriptions and seal prints? Can you expect people who no longer learn the ancient *Zhuan* characters to know what a seal print is all about?
16 City Life
17 City Life (in English)
18 After being a journalist for eighteen years

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